10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

have been pushed into the western jungle infested areas of South Andaman by the foreign settlers and even now attempts of establishing contacts and maintaining good will have proved completely futile. The Onges at present, inhabit the island of Little Andaman, 40 miles from South Andaman and they have come under very negotiable and friendly terms. A detailed account of these aboriginal population has been given in a chapter on the aboriginal population.

Leaving aside the aboriginal population, the islands are being inhabited by the local-borns or the Andaman Indians who have settled in and around the urban centre of Port Blair. The convicts of the penal settlement have settled in these areas by bringing their family members from the mainland or by getting married with the convict women and to-day they are the Andaman Indians. The Andaman Indians drawn from different parts of India and having different languages have become an integrated homogeneous community with Hindi as their spoken language and Urdu as their written script. Such a formation of homogeneous community is verily an example of fusion of different groups under a geographical setting with a common economic and social background. These people shared the major merit of development of the islands. Though agricultural development was attempted, it remained confined to a few areas only. The Andaman Indians being mostly non-agriculturists have shown a reluctance to agricultural practices which is evident from the gradual inflow of these people from agricultural to non-agricultural pursuits, especially in the Government services. The absence of any genuine attempt, to a great extent because of the lack of Government help, has told immensely on the relatively poor development of agriculture. These people are getting fairly educated at Schools in Port Blair and have the collegiate education in the mainland. The educational attainments have, however, been quite upto the satisfaction of meeting the demands of the institutions at Port Blair and in the islands.

Apart from the aboriginal population, a few groups of Bhantus and Mapillas, two criminal tribes of India, and a few Burmans and Karens have settled in the islands. Excepting the Karens who have settled through free enterprise in the north of Middle Andaman, all the groups were brought to the islands to serve the terms of their conviction. However, all these groups have settled quite peacefully in the islands with agriculture as their basis of economy. A limited number of people come to the islands for serving in the administration but they have no interest to settle in the islands and even to-day, the service in the Govt. offices

10:Sen K-3,4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

563 is made lucrative by way of giving an additional allowance of 33.3% to the basic salary in the islands. The lack of social and cultural developments coupled with the remoteness of these islands still now provoke this apathy. Since the independence, the colonisation of the uprooted East Bengal refugees together with some people from South India is being implemented. An appraisal of the resources of the islands shows the possibility of the development of agriculture with rice as the staple crop, as is common to tropics and on account of the hilly terrain and the vegetative cover, the area of the agricultural development is not at all considerable but quite sufficient for 5000 families. Of all the three main islands, the North, Middle and South Andamans, Middle Andaman offers the maximum potentiality by virtue of the bigger area, presence of a number of river valleys and absence of any other settlement of the later settlers or aborigines. Next to it is the North Andaman and lastly the South Andaman though it seems to be the most lucrative of all the islands. The response of the refugees in the beginning of the implementation of such a programme has been poor which largely owes to the lack of knowledge about the islands, the long distance from the mainland and also due to their being a land of aborigines and penal settlement. However the improved knowledge and the personal acquaintance with the islands have proved a long way in dispelling those aweful ideas. A new chapter in the history of the islands has opened for such enterprises which aims at an all-round regional development simultaneously with the agricultural settlement.

563 For such a small group of islands the cultural diversity is quite conspi-
648 cuous arising out of the settlement of a heterogeneous group of people coming from different parts of India and also of some from Burma. Though circumstances have played a great role in bringing about a homogeneity, a precise observation shows their distinct characteristics. The aboriginal population has, however, become an object of academic study only and the few of them, the Jarawas, the Onges and the Sentinelese, who are surviving need a deeper intimacy with the civilised people but so far except the Onges such efforts have not proved successful. The penal settlement which ultimately gave way to the development of settlement in South Andaman did not prove very envigorating for the lack of Government help, co-operation and imbalanced sex-ratio. The demographic characteristics have been dealt in details in the chapter on the later settlers and show how much imbalanced it is for the successful growth of population. However the agricultural settlement of the refugees obviously paves the way for a healthy development of the population and

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

simultaneously with it a successful all-round regional development of the islands.

The resources of the islands having a small areal extent are very limited though the forest and sea products are fairly rich to deserve special mention. The presence of a variety of valuable species of timber in these islands has led to their exploitation since the development of the Penal settlement. The important species of timber found in the Andaman forests are padauk, garjan etc. In the previous decades, the forest exploitation was never associated with a commensurate amount of forest regeneration. Such policies are being followed at present for saving the forest resources from ruthless exploitation without any adequate means of ensuring a perennial supply of timber by systematic regeneration. The recent colonisation scheme has invoked the enquiry for the clearance of the forests. Andaman forests being rich in timber and also being the only major revenue earning source of the islands should by no means be ruthlessly cleared for settlement. Not only it depletes the forest resources but also degenerates the soil—the soil erosion being the immediate victim after such clearance of forests. Considering the primary importance of the forest resources of the islands, it seems to be a plausible agreement that at least 50% of the land should be reserved under forest cover and a further curtailment from this percentage will undoubtedly lead to serious consequences of the soil simultaneously with a great decrease in the resources of the islands.

The sea products range from a wide variety of products from sea shells to sea fisheries. The collection of sea shells is in vogue from a fairly long time and the sea fisheries, mostly being confined to the coastal areas, is conducted by the fishermen and the tribal people for their own consumption. There is a good deal of possibility for furthering the development of marine fisheries on a commercial scale but the lack of enterprise and capital investment has not given rise to any appreciable development. The only two enterprises of the fisheries are those of Trochus and Turbo shells by the Japanese during 1930-36 and another enterprise by a business concern in 1947. Even the present catch from the coastal areas amount to only 300 lbs., a considerable lag from the demand within the islands.

The means of earning livelihood in the islands were hunting and collecting by the aboriginal population who have not even to-day learnt the techniques of domesticating plants and also animals except the Onges who have domesticated the dogs very recently. The penal settlement and the subsequent expansion of the administrative seat at Port Blair

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

gave way to the development of agriculture over an extremely limited area in South Andaman — paddy cultivation and coconut plantations have succeeded quite well. The plantations of rubber, tea and coffee also developed in the South Andaman over very small areas but ultimately did not prove very successful, partially due to the lack of adequate care. Simultaneously with the settlement of the refugees, new areas are being brought under plough which had never been interfered with human hands. The growth of agriculture based on rice cultivation together with vegetable gardening, development of orchards, coconut cultivation will bring about self-sufficiency of the islands and make the people self-supporting.

Industrial development of any big scale cannot be foreseen except the lumbering industry because of the lack of resources, power and also of any appreciable home market. Besides lumbering, the fishing industry, if properly co-ordinated with the mainland, can be developed to a great extent. A number of cottage industries based on coconuts, sea and forest products have developed, of which the coirmaking has developed most.

The characteristics, common to the tropical islands, are to a large degree manifested in these islands. The physical environment suffers from a number of limitations. Hot and humid climate is ameliorated by the influence of the sea in all parts as none of them are more than 10 miles away from the sea. The problems of soil are quite tremendous and such signs are only discernible to a small extent in the islands which might share greater proportions in the future if adequate measures of careful cultivation are not undertaken. The natural vegetation should be carefully preserved and regenerated after the felling of the trees not only for the conservation of the vegetation but also for saving the soil from the serious consequences of erosion. The cultural environment is a mosaic of variety because of the different types of people who have been living in these islands, however negligible their number might be. The imbalance of regional growth, being exclusively confined to the South Andaman, is being removed with the growth of settlement in the other parts of the islands and the indications of the shift in gravity of the economic interests is synchronising with the progress of settlement in the North and Middle Andamans. Mayabunder is handling a greater share in the movement of commodities and passengers. Such changes are undoubtedly very much welcome as the lowering of the disparities in the regional economy and growth speak of an all-round regional development.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE PEOPLE

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The study of the people of the Andamans is rendered extremely interesting by virtue of the great diversities in the types of population. Obviously for the islands like the Andamans the diversities of population are far out of proportion. The islands remained as an abode of the aborigines, the negritoes, in complete seclusion and the only outside interference that had tampered the islands were the occasional raids by the sea pirates from Malaya. The beliefs about the occasional exchanges of commodities and ideas of the pirates with the Andamanese and the trade of the Andamanese for being sold as slaves in the courts of Siam and Cambodia are still now questions of doubt. However, it was only at the end of the 18th century, with the attempt of the formation of settlements and later on, of the penal settlement, that there began an influx of foreign peoples, mainly from the different parts of the mainland of India. With the formation of the penal colony, convicts were brought over to the islands in numbers and also a few attempts of free colonisation by some people from Burma and India were made. The convicts who were from the different parts of India and the free colonizors who were diverse enough in their social and cultural traits gave a character of heterogeneity to the islands. It was only after the attainment of the independence that the settlement of the East Bengal refugees and of some people from South India is taking place in the Andamans. This is going to add further to the cultural diversity of the islands. This scheme of colonisation of the East Bengal refugees and of some people from South India is the first attempt of some importance for the permanent colonization in the islands.

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Such a variety in the types of people, can be broadly divided into three groups.

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(a) The aboriginal population.
(b) The Later Settlers, and
(c) The New Settlers.

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The aboriginal population belongs to the negrito stock and therefore, has an affinity with the Semangs and Sakais of Malaya, the Veddas of Ceylon and the other negrito groups of Southeast Asia. Some attribute the origin of these aborigines to the settlement of some Portuguese negro slaves who had survived by coming to these islands after a ship-

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10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

The formation of the penal colony in the islands brought in a number of convicts from time to time to serve death sentence or life sentence because of the political or criminal offence and majority of the convicts had ultimately settled in the islands and at present they have got mixed up irrespective of the caste, creed and religion with a fair degree of homogeneity. They are known as Andaman Indians. Besides these Andaman Indians, the groups of Karens and Burmans constitute a very small percentage of the Burmese population in the islands who foster their indigenous traditions. The need for land for the rehabilitation of the refugees in India due to the partition has made from for the settlement of some refugees in the islands. As the settlement programme of these refugees and also of some people from South India demanded the search for suitable land for colonization of the people, a number of delegations had explored the possibilities. The islands with the extreme smallness in size can hardly make room for the lakhs of refugees but the limited settlement that has been established has definitely provided some of the unfortunates with a small plot of land to live on. This idea of colonization is unique in the settlement history of the islands as we do not find in the earlier periods such an attempt for permanent colonization except by some people from Burma. So long, the permanent settlements grew out of the settlement of the free convicts and in most cases under compulsion. The settlement of the later settlers was so long confined within the South Andaman only and especially around Port Blair. But this colonization scheme which has started operating since March, 1949 is throwing open the different parts of the islands for permanent settlement.

As the aboriginal population and the later settlers are the determinants of the dynamism of the islands, three separate chapters are added. The first chapter is devoted to the study of the aboriginal population and the other ones, to that of the later settlers and new settlers.

[The two chapters on the later settlers and the new settlers haven't been processed. - Analyst]

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Ariolo

175 a furious aversion to foreigners. This hatred has been rekindled
179 during the last hundred years by a number of unfortunate incidents,
648 but at one time the islanders were favourably disposed towards seafarers passing by, if we are to believe Niccolo dei Conti and Cesare Federici, fleeting visitors to the islands in 1440 and 1569. They both wrote of the peaceful native canoes that approached their ships, and this is confirmed by other travellers, like the Italians Fra Odorico da Pordenone in 1332 and Giovan Francesco Gemelli Caresi in 1709.

Violent clashes with the coastal tribes only became frequent when the English began to take an interest in the Andamans as a possible penal colony. The first prisoners to be sent there were some Indians, in 1788. In 1796 the colony was abolished owing to the swift death of nearly all the prisoners from tropical diseases. The attempt was repeated in 1858 after a mission entrusted to F. Mouat, and this time the seeds of decline for the islanders were sown. Efforts were begun to approach the coastal peoples, and even, strangely enough, those of the forests, the now ferocious Jarawas. Some of these tentative overtures were well received, but once the islanders came to think they had been betrayed it was enough to rekindle the hatred of strangers which they have retained ever since.

166 The evidence obtainable from archaeological excavations shows
[172] that for thousands of years the people encountered by the English in the coastal areas were the sole inhabitants of Great Andaman, living by fishing rather than by hunting or cultivation in the forests. The Jarawas arrived later. Migration from Little Andaman, imposed in relatively recent times by lack of food, brought them to Great Andaman. Since the entire coastal region was already occupied, the new arrivals took refuge in the forests of the hinterland. There they were happy, for they found an abundance of wild honey
[628] and fruit which amply fulfilled their needs. A spontaneous equilibrium was established between the coast-people and the forest-people, and both prospered.

175 The arrival of an appreciable number of foreigners in 1858 im-
179 mediately changed the situation. The peoples of the coast, who
648 were the most anxious to make friends with the strangers, paid for
16 this fatal error with virtual extermination. When the foreigners had
101 definitely established themselves, the coastal Andamanese – *Aricto*
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11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Arioto

in the local language, as opposed to the people of the interior, the *Eremtaga* – appear to have numbered between six and eight thousand. Over the years their place has been taken by more than thirteen thousand foreigners, most of whom were deportees, enjoying relative liberty as servants of government officials, farmers and foresters. The settlers, voluntarily or involuntarily, introduced the islanders to alcohol and tobacco, forcing them to turn to the foreigners in order to satisfy their craving. In the famous and extremely frank work of the English explorer M. V. Portman (*A History of our Relations with the Andamanese*, Calcutta, 1899) official letters are reproduced which give precise instructions in the matter to government officials. The result of these instructions was to transform the Arioto into alcohol and tobacco addicts. Syphilis was passed to the native women by the deportees, and from them to their men. When, a few years after the mass importation of prisoners, the government authorities became aware of the infection among the Arioto, not one of them had escaped. The miserable twenty-three survivors of the eight to nine thousand of a century ago show the ultimate result only too well, and their final extinction is imminent.

Before the advent of the new civilization, the Arioto had divided up into at least ten distinct communities, but without any true tribal organization. They respected a form of chief, chosen by tacit consent for his personal qualities rather than by name or by birth-right; but the chiefs acted merely as paternal advisers, to be respected in times of trouble, with no illusions of authority. No one commanded, and none obeyed: all were content to follow the whim of the moment, with no conception of social obligation.

When the foreigners arrived, there were five main groups of Arioto on North Andaman, the Cari, Chede, Cora, Jeru and Tabo. Another five groups were in South Andaman, the Balawa, Bea, Bogig-iab, Joi and Col. With the numerical decline of the Arioto, who had always been endogamous within their group, a tendency arose for the survivors to merge and inter-marry, so that the twenty-three alive today are in fact the result of the mixing of the northern and southern Arioto, and of these with Indians and Burmese. The chief of these twenty-three individuals is Loca, a name in itself an indication of this ethnic mixture. Loca means 'whiskers', and he himself has a moustache, whereas pure Negritos have no body or facial hair.

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the river and indeed so practically contiguous that the towns are virtually one.

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The real interest of the Tamprabarni, its irrigation apart, lies in the future. The Tamprabarni is probably unique among Indian rivers in that it was harnessed to provide direct hydraulic power for cotton spinning: the first of two turbine-driven mills was set up in 1885. At Papanasam there is a 300-ft fall which is being developed to produce 21,000 kW (ultimate capacity 28,000). The actual engineering work is completed, and full development is limited only by doubts as to the need of conserving water for irrigation; but the possibilities of cheap electricity in this area are manifold: foremost perhaps an increase of well-irrigation in the half-dead edaphically arid tracts, and industrially the revivification of the palmyra sugar industry, the extension of cotton in all its branches. Oilseeds could certainly be more widely cultivated in the red soil area, possibly leading to soap and allied industries, and the hills contain vast reserves of bamboo for paper-making.

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands

A 133

These two groups, directly under Delhi, continue the trend of the Arakan Yomas, linking them to the Sumatran ranges. They differ between themselves to a marked extent; both physically and culturally.

1. *The Andamans*

These number over 200, extending NNE/SSW for some 220 miles between 10° and 14° N; the total area is 2500 sq mls, of which the great bulk is in the three major islands of North, Middle, and South Andaman. These three, indeed, are separated only by narrow mangrove-fringed inlets, so that they are often referred to as virtually one island, Great Andaman. The islands are formed of sandstones, limestones, clays, and some serpentines, probably mainly Tertiary, and are highly dissected, rising to 2400 ft. With a temperature never far from 85° F, rainfall over 100 ins., and a monsoonal distribution with no really rainless season, they are naturally jungle-covered: mangrove along coasts and inlets, tropical evergreen along valleys and on steeper wetter slopes, elsewhere moist deciduous. Forestry is perhaps the most important economic activity and is fairly well organised; a match factory was set up about 1930.

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The total population in 1941 was 21,316, but this included a strange medley: aboriginals, convicts and ex-convicts with their 'local-born' children, officials. A century ago the aboriginals probably numbered about 5000; in 1931 they were estimated at about 460, in 1941 at 62; many tribes have died right out. At once shy and savage, they had a reputation for ferocity, and early settlement was avowedly to protect shipwrecked

6:Spate N-4 (no date)1954 AWI India
Andamans A22

mariners from massacre. Despite efforts at conciliation there was violence on both sides; attempts were made indeed to settle some of the more friendly groups in an 'Andamans Home' as fishers of trepang (sea-slug) and collectors of edible bird-nests, both for the Chinese market. But the only result was to civilise them out of existence, largely by venereal disease.[52] The Andamanese are—perhaps one should say were—Negritos, and as they represented perhaps the nearest approach to a 'pure primitive' society, both ethnically and culturally, these hunters and gatherers have attracted anthropological attention out of proportion to their numbers.[53]

Transportation of convicts to the Andamans began after the Mutiny. Latterly there was a change of emphasis, hopeless criminals being re-transported to India and the settlement becoming in effect an open prison for young men condemned to life sentences for more or less excusable homicide. After a few months in jail convicts were allowed to become wage-earning employees of Government, to wear ordinary dress, and to marry or bring out their wives. These changes were reflected in the sex composition of the population: 15,158 males to 2980 females in 1901, 14,872 to 6444 in 1941. The cultural landscape also changed: "Everywhere the ephemeral huts of former times are giving way to well-constructed two-storeyed houses of sawn timber and iron roofs," and a good deal of reclamation of malarial swamp took place around Port Blair. The communal composition of the population was an odd reflection of social conditions: in 1941 Muslims were about a third, largely Moplahs from Madras deported after their 1921 rebellion; Sikhs were 3·5% against an All-India total of 1·5%, Buddhists—i.e. Burmese—over 13%. This corresponds to the prevalence of dacoity in Burma and to the Sikh *penchant* for "liquor, love, and fights".

Practically all the economic development is in the Settlement of Port Blair, an area of about 500 sq mls in the S of South Andaman; here is 90% of the population, the remainder being in forest camps. About 75,000 ac. are more or less cleared, of which about 10–15,000 are cultivated and as much grazing land. Paddy and coconuts each account for about a third of the cultivation, and there are (or were) struggling plantations of rubber and coffee, negligible in area.

The war and the Japanese occupation saw a fall in population to about 16,000, and on re-occupation the penal settlement was formally abolished. From time to time schemes of Anglo-Indian agricultural settlement have been mooted, and in March 1948 a batch of 132 families displaced from E Bengal arrived. It may be noted that some Burmese politicians periodi-

[52] 1931 Census Vol. II (Andamans and Nicobars), 11–23.

[53] The classic treatments are those of Sir Richard Temple in the 1901 Census and of A. R. Brown in *The Andaman Islanders* (1922). There is unfortunately little geography in the latter book; what there is is largely summed up in L. Garrard's 'sociograph' in *Studies in Regional Consciousness and Environment* (ed. I. C. Peate, 1930), 82.